

## FOCUS ON UKRAINE

# Ukraine on the brink of civil war....

As of 2014-04-17

By John Antal



**FlashPoints** is a bi-monthly update on the most critical national security issues facing the United States. Author and military expert John Antal will provide you with insights and a quick synopsis of the top three flash points in the world at the time of each report. FlashPoints will list the greatest danger to the USA, and then list risks of medium and serious danger. Keep abreast of the latest impending international crisis by reviewing FlashPoints

Talks were held in Geneva, Switzerland on April 17, 2014. The US, EU, Ukraine and Russia concluded a joint agreement they hope will de-escalate the conflict. On the evening of April 17, 2014, the rhetoric on Russian TV (RT) concerning the agreement was very skeptical. RT reported that pro-Russian separatists do not trust Kiev. These pro-Russian groups in eastern Ukraine pledged not to disarm and will provide their official answer about the agreement to the press tomorrow.

It seems clear to many who have been watching the developments in Crimea and Ukraine that Russian President Vladimir Putin is not interested in any deal that does not result in, at a minimum, the neutralization of Ukraine, and most likely, the control of Eastern Ukraine by Russia. Words on paper will not stop Putin's ambitions. These talks will not translate into peace in eastern Ukraine.

The Russians are playing the same tune they played in Crimea. Putin is uninterested in words or diplomacy. **Putin's goal is a resurgent, more powerful Russia.** Putin denied for weeks that there were Russian forces in Crimea, but today in a televised interview he stated that Russian troops were in Crimea from the start, and the presence of Russian troops in Crimea was the reason there was so little bloodshed during the annexation. What is at stake in Ukraine is the fabric of international relations and the start a new Cold War -- a Cold War where, according to Putin, China and Russia are natural allies.



Vladimir Putin  
Владимир Путин

**“The sharp  
escalation of the  
conflict essentially  
puts the nation on  
the brink of civil  
war,”**

Vladimir Putin in a phone call to German Chancellor  
Angela Merkel on April 16, 2014.



**"They must be warned that if they do not lay down their arms, they will be destroyed,"** Vasyl Krutov, head of the Ukrainian Security Service, said according to French Press Agency. He reiterated that the separatists were getting support from the Russian army's Main Intelligence Directorate, or GRU.



Ukrainian General Vasyl Krutov



Russian Prime Minister  
Dmitry Medvedev

**"There is foreboding of a civil war in #Ukraine,"**  
tweeted Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev on April 16, 2014.

## 1. East Ukraine

### Will there be a civil war?

- On April 15, 2014, the Ukrainian military conducted a successful combined air and land operation to retake an airfield in Kramatorsk in eastern Ukraine occupied by pro-Russian activists. Shots were fired, but no casualties reported.
- Armed pro-Russian groups control much of the rest of eastern Ukraine.
- In the city of Kramatorsk, several Ukrainian BMD armored vehicles and their crews from an elite Ukrainian Airborne unit either surrendered or defected to the pro-Russian side.
- If these were defections, they are a serious threat to the ability of Ukraine to defend its territory.
- Putin believes that time is on his side and that the ethnic Russian population of eastern Ukraine will give him the casus belli to occupy Ukraine.
- Russia has at least 40,000 troops on call to move into Ukraine on Putin's order.
- Russian TV is working overtime to depict the government in Ukraine as led by corrupt, fascist oligarchs.
- NATO is strengthening its military presence in the Baltic and Mediterranean but has ruled out using force with regards to the Ukrainian crisis.
- A Ukrainian Civil War could be days away. If fighting breaks out, and the Russian Army moves in, it is problematical if the Ukrainian military will fight to defend eastern Ukraine.



Russian soldiers on patrol at Simferopol International Airport, Crimea on February 28, 2014. Notice there are no identifying patches to show these soldiers as Russian. Is Russia executing the same strategy of “infestation attack” in eastern Ukraine? Voice of America photo.





**Pro-Russian militants in the Donetsk police headquarters, April 12, 2014.  
Voice of America photo.**

as of April 17, 2014





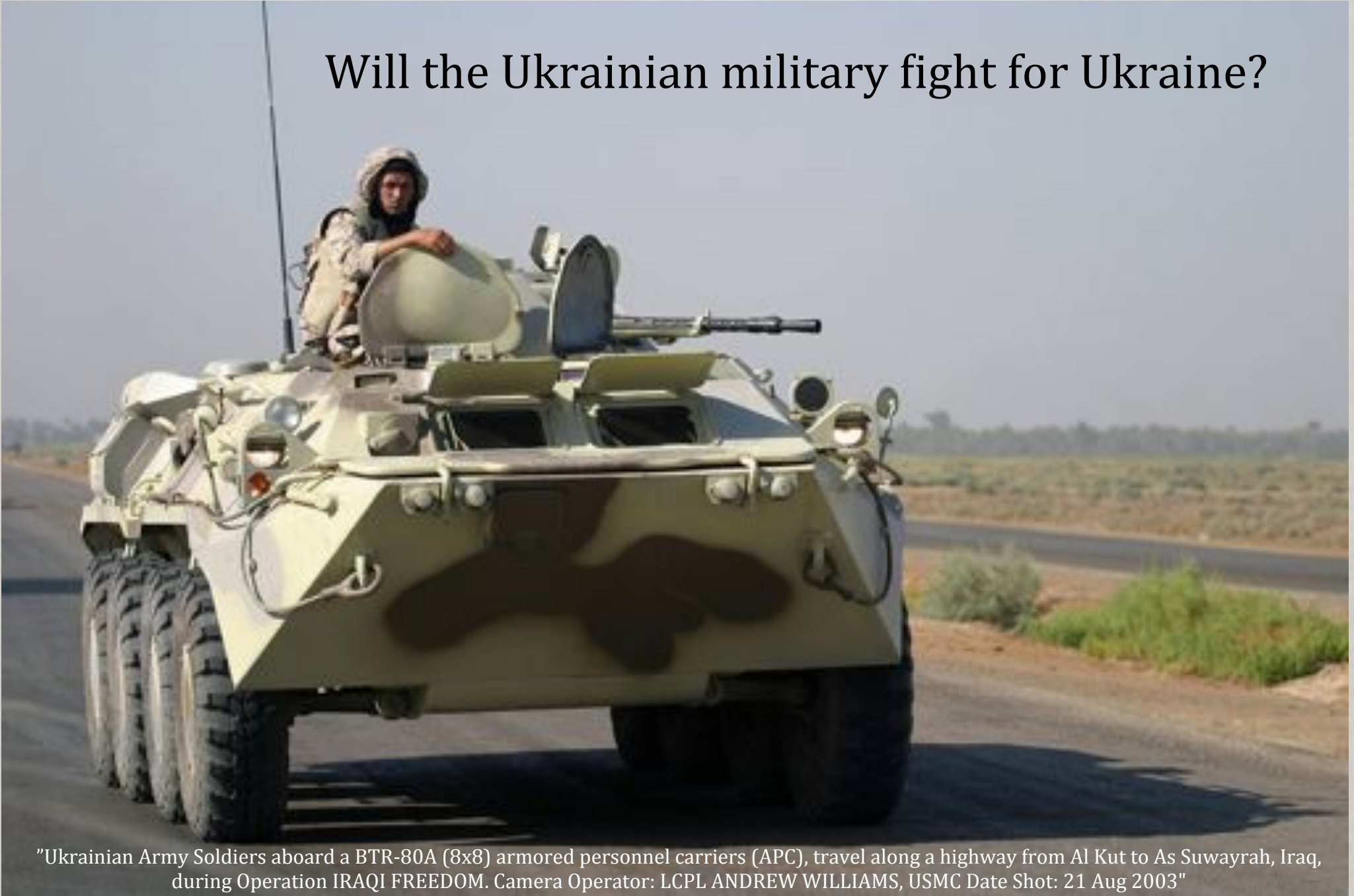
**Russia has 40,000 troops poised on the border with Ukraine.**

(Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons, public domain)

as of April 17, 2014



## Will the Ukrainian military fight for Ukraine?



"Ukrainian Army Soldiers aboard a BTR-80A (8x8) armored personnel carriers (APC), travel along a highway from Al Kut to As Suwayrah, Iraq, during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Camera Operator: LCPL ANDREW WILLIAMS, USMC Date Shot: 21 Aug 2003"

**Analysis:** Momentum is key and Putin has the momentum. The Ukrainian government in Kyiv is unable to control the situation in eastern Ukraine, especially in the major cities of Kharkiv and Donetsk. Most likely, Russian GRU and Spetsnaz forces are involved in this unrest. Russian TV images of armed men wearing body armor and balaclavas are displaying too high a degree of physical fitness, professionalism and skill to be militia. As tensions continue, the likelihood of armed conflict increases and the chances of a civil war breaking out rise. Civil war would give Russia the perfect pretext to invade eastern Ukraine and possibly annex all of Ukraine. Without a firm commitment to a deterrent strategy by the US and NATO, it is only a matter of time before Russia controls first eastern and then all of Ukraine.



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**Ralph Peters**, Fox News Strategic Analyst and author of  
*Cain at Gettysburg*

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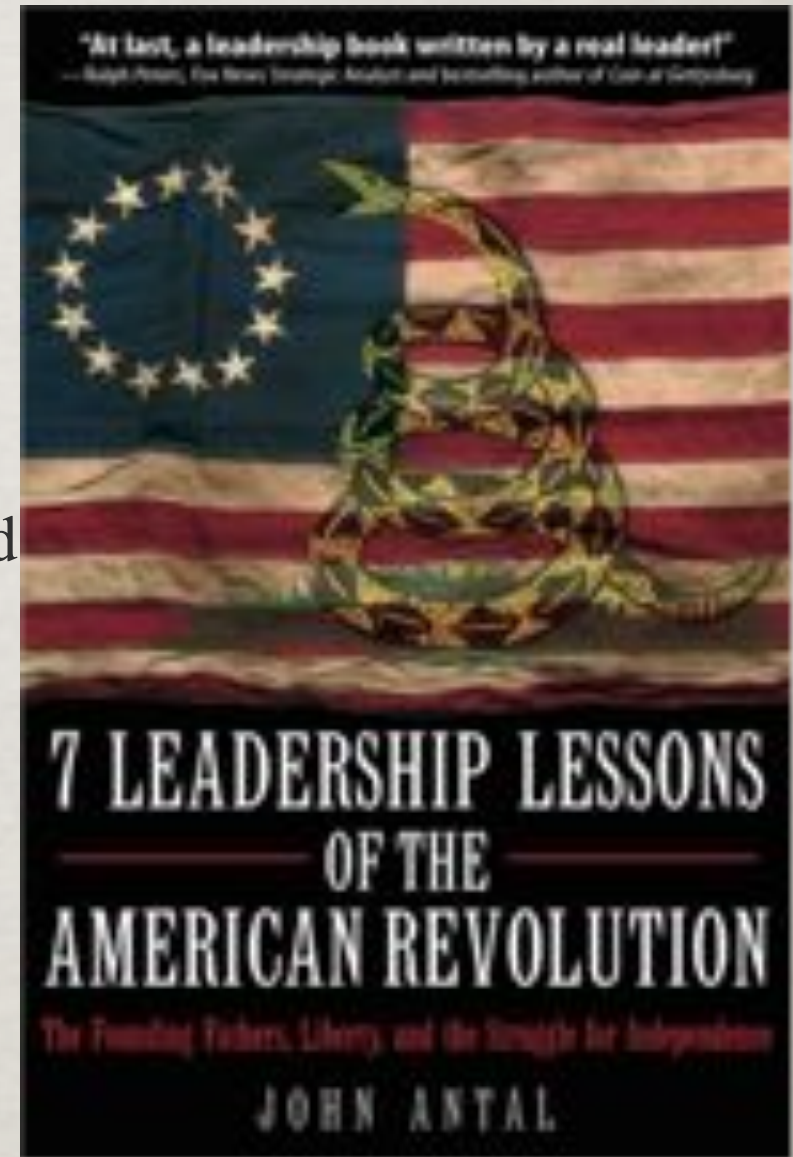
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Some more Reviews of 7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution

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"John Antal's timely book, 7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution is succinctly written and easily understood. On the surface, it demonstrates how those who risked all to create this republic used specific leadership principles to overcome tremendous challenges in that endeavor. These same techniques are just as valid in this century as in theirs. Along the way, Antal paints these revolutionaries as living, breathing human beings with high-risk tasks to accomplish. But Antal's study actually goes much farther – because behind his straightforward storytelling lies something much more important: an examination of what principles that leadership came from, and what principles it should serve. You'll come away with the feeling that the founders of this country weren't "historical figures" but living, breathing human beings with huge problems to solve, for which they used methods available to any one of us who cares to learn."

Bradley Thompson, television writer and producer and the co-writer for the hit TV series' Battlestar Galactica and the second season of Falling Skies.

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